favours being given to foreign oil companies ;

(c) the number of vessels which fly the Indian flag are lying un-utilised; and

(d) what steps are being taken to induce a more prudent tone in ONGC transac tions?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Charter hiring of rigs by ONGC has been done after foreign exchange release was cleared by the Government. Govern ment takes all precautions to ensure that no favour is shown to anyone.

(c) As far as rigs are concerned one Indian owned jack up rig which is undergoing repairs is reported by ONGC to be unutilized.

(d) Procurement of materials and services in ONGC is already done through competitive bidding.

Exploration of Oil and Gas in Rajasthan

294. SHRI DHULESHWAR MEENA : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whehter any plan has been drawn up to explore deeply the desert sands of Rajasthan in quest for striking more oil and gas of commerical quantity and quality;

(b) if so, what are its broad features; and

(c) the outcome of the exploratory efforts made so far in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) and (b) During the 8th Plan (1992—97) ONGC and Oil India Limited have planned to carry out a total of 9000 SLK and 2550 GLK of 2D and 300 Sq. Kms. of 3D seismic surveys and 1,20,650 Meteres of exploratory drilling in Rajasthan.

(c) ONGC has discovered gas in Rajasthan at 5 places viz. Bhakri Tibba, Bankia, Ghotaru, Khartar and Manhera Tibba. OIL has discovered gas at Tanot, Ramgarh, Dandewala and Jalalwala in Jaisalmer basin and heavy oil at Baghewala and Tavriwala in Bikaner—Nagaur basin.

Shortage of Petroleum Products in Madhya Pradesh

295. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that many parts of Madhya Pradesh are facing acute shortage of petrol and petroleum products since February this year ;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that oil companies are not supplying requisite quantity of petrol and petroleum products to Madhya Pradesh;

(d) if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(e) what remedial action Government have taken or propose to take to make petroleum products easily available in Madhya Pradesh ?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND) : (a) to (e) Occasional shortage of petroleum products were experienced in certain areas of Madhya Pradesh such as Indore, Ratlam, Gwalior, Nishadpura etc. due to two railway accidents, partial shortage of tank wagons and inadequate availablity of tank lorries for transportation by road. All possible efforts are made to remedy the situation whenever any shortages occur in any area.

Additional Gas Cylinder

296. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the Press reports appearing in various newspapers in Madhya Pradesh wherein it has been alleged that LPG dealers in Madhya